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The Recovery of the Sense of God

BY J. D. JONES

IT IS the merest platitude to say that these days of ours are extraordinarily hard days for the Christian church. I am not at all inclined to exaggerate matters, nor will I consent for a moment to be numbered among the pessimists. But I want frankly and honestly to face the facts, and the facts plainly show that these are struggling and striving days for the church. We are having a harder fight than our fathers fought, and at the moment the fight seems to be going against us—so much so that one of our younger philosophers a few months ago confidently prophesied that in a hundred years science would have given the *coup de grace* to organized religion. Prophecies of that kind do not disturb me very much. I am not at all disposed to think that this day of the church's distress presages her decay and dissolution. There have been ebbs and flows in the church's history. There have been winters and springs. There have been times of weakness and times of resistless power. When men have declared that the church was on its death bed, there have been glorious resurrections. That is the characteristic of the Christian church and the Christian religion —according to Dean Church—this power of renewal.

The Decay of Religion

But while I would have us face the position with courage and confidence, I would also have us frankly face the facts of the present religious situation. And the facts are that at the moment the church is to a large extent neglected, and religion seems to be losing its hold over vast masses of mankind. And this neg-

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lect of the church and decay of religion is a symptom of something deeper and more serious still. That deeper and more serious thing is this—the very existence of God is being challenged and denied. The church all down the centuries has had to contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. It is familiar with battle. But when I think of the conflicts through which it has passed—the fight that raged around the question of the person of Christ, the fight which Luther fought for the freedom of the Christian soul, the more recent disputes and controversies about the Bible and its inspiration, and the dates and authorship of its various books—they all seem to me to be affairs of "outposts" and "outworks" compared to the fight that is upon us today. The attack today is not upon the outworks but upon the citadel itself. It is the existence of God that is being called in question.

Popular writers like H. G. Wells practically repudiate the idea of a personal God; Bernard Shaw talks about the "life force"; others dissolve God into "the sum of all ideal values"; while others like Bertrand Russell deny him altogether and declare that "the individual soul must struggle alone with what of courage it can command against the whole weight of a universe that cares nothing for its hopes and fears." The teaching of the scientists, backed by certain of the new psychologists, who reduce God to a projection of the human mind, percolates through magazine and novel into the minds of the men and women of our day. It creates their intellectual atmosphere, and in that atmosphere, touched by what Mr. Walter Lippman calls the "acids of modernity," belief in God, in the Christian God, has simply dissolved.

Christian Ethic Passing

And with the dissolving of the belief in God has come a challenge to the whole Christian ethic. Huxley and Tyndall, whatever may be said of their materialistic philosophy, were men of high ethical standards. I remember hearing Dr. Fairbairn describe John Morley (as he was then) as the best Christian in the cabinet of which he was a member, though he was a professed agnostic and spelled the word "God" always with a small "g." That was the peculiarity of the agnosticism of fifty years ago—while rejecting the Christian faith, it accepted and observed Christian ethics. But that position could not for long be maintained. Flowers will not grow if they have no root, and the Christian ethic has no compulsive authority apart from the Christian belief in God. This is the point Mr. Walter Lippmann stresses in his book, "A Preface to Morals." Men no longer believe in a sovereign God, a God who rules this world and who by the hand of Moses issued a moral code for his subjects, and therefore that moral code has lost its binding authority.

Mr. Lippmann is at any rate logical, though I am left wondering why he speaks of Moses rather than Jesus. For wherein does the authority of the Christian ethic really consist? It consists, in the last analysis, in this—that we believe it to be the expression of the mind and will of Almighty God. The moral law is not something which we have invented. It is not the product of long custom. It is not something which by long experience has been discovered to be right and good. I claim for it a higher authority than that. It derives from Almighty God. It comes to us as the expression of the will of the Creator and Ruler of this world. Holiness, truth, purity, love—they are not expediencies simply, things which, on the whole, the race has discovered to be for its benefit and happiness, they are things which the Lord requires of us and they have behind them divine authority.

The Sex Debacle

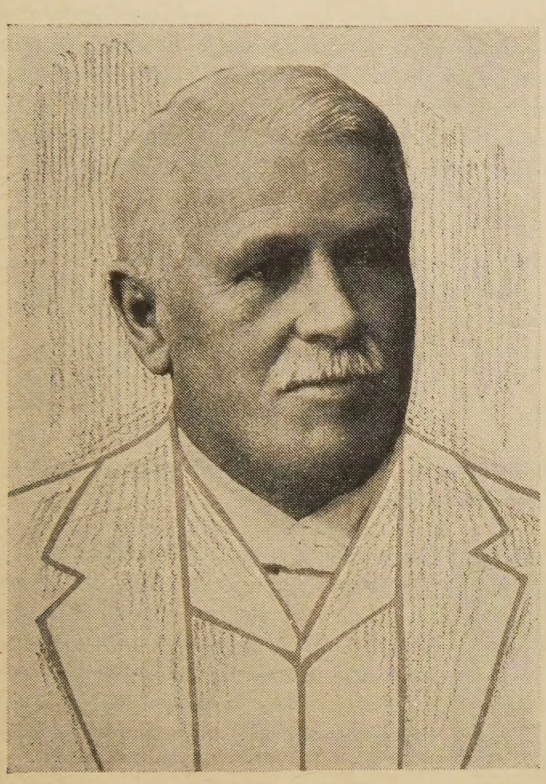
I do not know why, when we talk about morality, we at once think about the relation between the sexes. And yet honesty and truth are just elements in the Christian morality as charity is, and all three have behind them the same supernatural sanctions. Still, it is against the Christian conception of sexual morality that the modern attack is principally directed. We have all been conscious, since the war, of a certain relaxation of morals. We accounted for it while the war lasted by saying that it was due to the abnormal conditions of the time. But the war ceased twelve years ago, but the moral revolt still continues. And there is nothing shy or timid about the revolt. It is bold, brazen and unashamed! It justifies itself. It scoffs at the old reticences and decencies! It repudiates all the old conventions and taboos. It allows itself a freedom both in speech and conduct that shocks all who have been brought up in the older tradition. I am quite prepared to believe, as indeed I do believe, that multitudes of young people who allow themselves a liberty in speech and even in conduct which almost terrifies us, remain at heart entirely sound and wholesome. But we must face the facts, and the fact that sexual indulgence has been freed from certain social consequences has, if report be true, led to an alarming increase of secret immorality. Delivered from the fear of social consequences and the stigma of public shame, young people gaily and cheerfully flout the moral laws without any thought that they stand for eternal truth because they stand for the mind and will of Almighty God.

The "New Morality"

Of course, if they do not, they have no binding and abiding authority and men are free to alter them. And certain clever and brilliant men among us, starting from the position that there is no God and that religion is a mere superstition, seriously propose to fling the old morality on to the scrap heap. Here is one of them, in a book recently published, justifying promiscuity, advocating temporary marriage, and saying that even in marriage the parties need not be faithful to one another—reducing love to vagrant lust, and destroying the family. I asked myself what would become of human society if that man's ideas were generally adopted, if the sanctities of the home were destroyed, if purity and chastity were no longer counted to be virtues and holy married love was banished from

the world. What kind of a world would that be? It would be a vile and beastly world, and upon such a foul and beastly world the doom would be pronounced: "Ye shall be as Sodom and ye shall be like unto Gomorrah."

And yet into such a state of moral anarchy and dissolution the world may fall if it ceases to believe in God. Mr. Lippmann sees this plainly enough, and the object he sets before himself in his book is that of finding some sanctions for the moral life which he can



J. D. Jones

substitute for the authority of God which he assumes to have gone. Mr. Lippmann is a serious man—he doesn't whoop over the decay of belief in God as Mr. Bertrand Russell does because of the emancipation which he believes will follow. Mr. Lippmann sees the peril. He knows this emancipation may issue in sheer anarchy. So he casts about for something which shall take the place of the old discarded belief in God.

Where Mr. Lippmann Falls Short

I cannot honestly say that the sanctions he proposes are an adequate substitute. He casts the man back upon himself. He says that only the regenerate, the disinterested, the mature can make use of freedom. Quite so! But how are you to get the regenerate and disinterested man? The goal of human effort, he says, using the words of Confucius, is "to follow what the heart desires without transgressing what is right." That very sentence raises questions. Where is the man to get his idea of right from? It is a kind of humanism, a new and modern positivism that Mr. Lippmann preaches. He knows of no power outside the man himself which will help him to realize his ideals and enable him to curb the desires of his heart in the interests of what is right. It is like bidding a man lift himself by his own waistband. Mr. Lippmann's book is brilliantly written, but its effect is chilling and depressing.

Man a Worshiping Being

Humanism is a creed of despair. There is no goodness in it for baffled, beaten and broken men. There is no remedy in it for the dissolution which he fears and foresees as the result of the prevailing unbelief.

But we challenge the assumption from which these modern writers start. The suggestion they make that modern science has abolished God has absolutely no warrant. Modern science has done nothing to disprove or invalidate belief in God. It is strange that people should be talking about science destroying religion at this very time when the greatest scientists are telling us that this world is a created world, that this earth is the only planet on which human life exists, when a physicist like Eddington flatly rejects scientific determinism and frankly declares his belief in God. Science in our day is increasingly tending towards the spiritual interpretation of the universe.

And if the created universe speaks of God, so also does human life and human experience. There is the significant fact of the universal belief in God. Wherever man is found, he is a worshiping being. There are certain emotions and experiences of his soul which he can only account for by saying that he is in touch with some Power, unseen but very real. These experiences may be crude in the case of primitive peoples but they are vivid and beautiful and exalted in the case of the saints. When Isaiah heard that voice in the temple saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for me?"; when Ezekiel sitting among the captives by the River Chebar, in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, saw his "visions of God"; when Luther heard the voice saying "the just shall live by faith"; when John Bunyan, agonizing beneath the burden of his sin, heard the words, "My grace is sufficient for thee"; when John Wesley in the little house at Aldersgate street felt his heart strangely warmed; when those young folk of the Oxford group movement have been conscious of a power that has released them from the tyranny of sin—they have all been absolutely sure that they were in touch with the living God.

Many Unshaken by Doubt

And it is not only great and conspicuous people who have experiences of that kind—they come to ordinary men and women, they are the common possession of the saints. There are multitudes of plain and humble folk who remain unshaken by doubt, undismayed by Professor Joad's prophecies because, to use a poet's words, "The heart stands up and answers: I have felt." And this direct and immediate experience of God is not to be dismissed as a kind of self deception, a bit of autosuggestion.

And it is not only our individual experiences which demand God to account for them—there is human life

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as a whole, the course of our race's history. The riddle of life may be hard to read. But few thinkers would feel justified in explaining it as the result merely of the accidental development of material things. Positively men have discovered in the life of the world a power not themselves making for righteousness. Negatively the abolition of God reduces life to a "tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." In a word, you cannot make sense of the world or of human life without God.

How Explain Jesus?

And then, finally, there is Jesus. What about Jesus? For the Christian morality rests on the authority of Jesus, and the authority of Jesus again derives from the fact that he stood in a unique relationship to God. The gospel story has been pretty freely criticized but after criticism has said all it has to say, one thing remains perfectly clear, and it is this—Jesus cannot be brought within the categories of ordinary humanity. In the history of our race he stands absolutely solitary and unique. There may be depths about the incarnation which we cannot plumb, but the only explanation which really accounts for Jesus is the one which these gospels give, viz., that he was God manifest in the flesh. To me he is all that—not the best of men, but the Everlasting Son of the Father, and I worship him as such. So the words of Jesus to me are not simply great words of human wisdom. They are the declaration of the mind and will of Almighty God.

To get rid of God, to banish him from the world men must ignore the universal human instinct, the testimony of conscience, the experiences of the saints and the fact of Jesus. The new moralists delude themselves. "The acids of modernity" have not dissolved God into an outgrown credulity. Behind the moral demand there still stands the living God. There may have to be fresh interpretations and readjustments of that demand to meet the changed circumstances of our time. But in principle and spirit we have that demand fully and finally expressed in the words and life of Jesus. So, for the salvation of society our most urgent need is a renewal of our faith in God, a revival of our sense of God. There is room and there is need for a restatement of the theistic argument.

And yet I am persuaded that apologetics is not going to do for our age what it needs. To begin with, the people whom we want to reach and convince do not come to listen to our apologetics. And, further, though the intellectual battle for the theistic position may be won—is already won, as we believe—thought takes a long time to percolate down to the crowd. What we really want is a new sense of God ourselves.

God in Us!

People will believe in the reality of God when they see he is a reality to us, when they see that he is really present in our lives, directing them, inspiring them, shaping them.

What we need is a deeper and richer and fuller religious life of our own. We have to confess that our religion often runs pretty thin. We are far from being "God-intoxicated." We are eminently wise and cautious and prudent people. It is often said that there is little difference between the conduct of a Christian and non-Christian. A religion that has little or no effect on conduct is not likely to commend the respect of those who are without. But a real faith in God—in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—making life clean, making it helpful and self-sacrificing, making it serene in trouble and triumphant in death—such a faith will win for God the belief and the allegiance of men.

God in us! Christ in us! That is our urgent need—a new sense of reality of God in ourselves.

When the Son of Man Comes

By Clarence E. Macartney

When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? Luke 18:8.

THIS question, when once read in the New Testament, haunts the mind, for it seems to raise a doubt as to whether Jesus thought that his great work of atonement and redemption would at the end be successful. The question implies a negative answer. The most emphatic way to say "yes" is to ask a question which implies "yes" for an answer. This Jesus did in the preceding verse, when he said, "Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?" Even if Jesus had not said what follows, "he will avenge them speedily," it is clear that his question carries an affirmative answer with it. In this case the question of Jesus implies a negative answer, for if the answer is "yes," there would have been no object in asking the question.

This question comes at the conclusion of the parable about the unjust judge and the widow, who finally persuaded the judge to avenge her of her adversary. Jesus makes it plain that circumstances will arise which will try our faith to the utmost. Nevertheless his people are to have faith and to persevere in their prayer, for God will speedily avenge the elect. However long delayed his vengeance, to man's impatience, it comes "speedily," in God's own time.

Having struck this great note of assurance that God will always act triumphantly and righteously, Christ turns to strike what seems to be a note of pessimism and gloom. Having foretold how the Son of man will come and vindicate the right and avenge his elect, he looks down the ages, and, as if musing to himself, asks what will be the state of the world when the Son of man comes. "Shall he find faith on the earth?"

The Son of Man Will Come

Before taking up the question asked by Christ, let us remind ourselves of the fact which is declared here that the Son of man will come. Christ was here in the midst of men in the world, and had spoken of himself as the Son of man and yet always he is speaking of another day when the Son of man shall come. This note of his second coming sounds like a major chord in the midst of Christ's teaching. Sometimes, with all our exhortations to duty and our struggle after Christian virtues, we are apt to forget that Christianity has a grand framework and fabric of fact around which all else is built. The four great historic facts are the incarnation, the atonement, the resurrection, the ascension, and here, the great future fact, the coming of the Son of man. This great truth was the master light of all the seeing and believing of the first apostles; their comfort in sorrow, their warning in sin, their inspiration and encouragement in the face of unbelief and persecution. On this hope they pillowed their heads; with it they bound up their wounds; and with it for a lamp they lighted the dark pathway of tomorrow.

Although that once most spoken of all truths is perhaps the least proclaimed today, any complete and true statement of Christianity must embrace it, and he who does this, says St. Paul to Timothy, will be a faithful minister of Christ. If the lapse of so many ages, with the Son of man not yet come, and our increased knowledge of a reign of law in the world makes it harder for us to conceive of so abrupt an intervention in the world's affairs and termination of its history, that is only the greater challenge to our faith. In the midst of the rush and hurry of the world, in the shadow of our trials and sorrows, or in the sunlight of our joys and hopes, let us stop for a moment and say with ourselves, "The Son of man will come."

Is the World Growing Better?

At first, this seems to ask the question, "Is the world getting better or worse?" Some take this question of Christ, with its implied negative, to be the sure evidence that no matter how much better the world may become, or whether or not we can say now that the world is getting better, it certainly will be in a bad state so far as faith is concerned when Christ comes.

There are those, however, who are confident that the world is much better today than it was yesterday, and will be much better tomorrow than it is today, and at the end it will be best of all. In support of their view, they cite the emancipation of woman, the abolition of slavery, the safeguarding of childhood, the spread of temperance, the changed lot of the prisoner and the insane, the practical disappearance of certain diseases which once plagued mankind. All this, they tell us, proves that the world is getting better.

Side by side with this, they give a summary of the mechanical and scientific devices which have added so much to the well-being and comfort of the race. In transportation, illumination, and in the transmission of sound, our world is not only a different world, but an altogether new world. These scientific triumphs, we are told, are but a prophecy of what will happen in the future, when man will be restored to his complete dominion over the natural world.

Another View

But, on the other hand, there are those who, surveying the same world, reading the same history, and believing the same Bible, take an altogether different view. As for the mechanical and scientific changes, these, they say, have no moral significance whatever. In the days of Christ men went up to Jerusalem riding upon an ass. No one would say that the man who goes up to Jerusalem today in a high powered automobile or aeroplane is for that reason a better man than the one who rode upon an ass. The inventions which are giving man dominion over the forces of nature are double-edged weapons, and may be turned against man's own breast. In the public press there was an account one day of an aeroplane carrying surgeons to save by operation the life of a man in a distant city. Another day there was the account of the experiment of an army bombing plane, which descended from an incredible flight and dropped a 1,000 pound explosive projectile, sufficient to blot out a whole city. The last war was bad enough, but probably not a circumstance to what the destruction and annihilation of another war would be.

In his interesting essay, "Daedalus," Dr. Haldane, of Cambridge university, after sketching the probable triumphs of natural science, has this to say, "Far from being an isolated phenomenon, the late war may be considered as one of those disruptive events, which we may constantly expect through the progress of science."

Man's Heart Is Wrong

External civilization and physical comforts in living have no deep moral or spiritual significance, and as for the knowledge of nature which some worship as a god, that opens no pathway for the improvement of man's heart. The trouble with man is in his heart, not his head. The world, the apostle said, at a time when world wisdom in science and art had reached a magnificent climax, "by wisdom"—that is, knowledge —"knew not God." The same is true today. An eminent psychologist, Leuba, published a book in which he gave the answers of a great number of eminent scientists to questions concerning their faith in God. These answers would not indicate that increase in that kind of knowledge has increased man's faith in God, but quite the opposite. I suppose the greatest inventor of our day is Edison. Yet Edison, if we can judge by an article he wrote some time ago on the subject, has little faith in immortality. He is a great scientist and a great inventor, but without much faith.

Having answered these arguments of those who foretell unbroken progress, those who do not take such rosy views of the world's future, point to conditions in human society which, to say the least, are very alarming. For example, the sinking of crime into

youth and childhood; the great increase, not only in crimes of violence, but in crimes of stealing and dishonesty; the apparently unhealable wound of corruption in the great cities, with their alliance between an inner criminal world and those in political office; and, worst of all, the open flouting of the Christian standards of marriage and chastity, and the tearing down of the veil of reverence which God has hung over the human body.

A Church Without Courage

As for the church—and that is the real test as to the world's increase or decrease in faith—the situation just now, we must frankly confess, is not of a nature to make us think that the world is sweeping on to perfection. Christ spoke a very significant word about the church being the salt of the earth, and what would happen to it when the salt has lost its savour. The organized church has, undoubtedly, in many places, through its efforts to accommodate the gospel to the opinions and prejudices of men, and its subordination or abandonment of the supernatural in Christianity, and its neglect of the great fact of redemption from sin by the atonement of the Son of God, lost its savour. It simply cannot do and say what God put it into the world to do and to say, because it has lost its courage, its faith, and its convictions.

All this, we are told, is in strict keeping with what is foretold in the Scriptures. Christ at great length gave a sketch of world conditions at the time of the coming of the Son of man. The one thing which is absent from that sketch is the picture of a world at peace, and universally subdued to God and to righteousness. Instead of that, the Son of man comes to a world in convulsion and in rebellion against God, and with tribulations and sorrow so intense and widespread that the love of many has waxed cold, and even the faith of the elect is disturbed. This is confirmed by the inspired apostle St. Peter, who, in his description of the world, says, "There shall come in the last days scoffers walking in their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming, for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old and the earth standing out of the water and in the water."

The Last Perilous Times

In other words, Peter predicts a state of society at the end of the world characterized by a vast disbelief in God as the Creator of the world. St. Paul, speaking not so much of the state of the world as the church, predicts anything but a millennial reign of righteousness and peace at the end. On the contrary, he gives an appalling picture of human society. He is famous for his sketch of Roman society when Christ came into the world, as we have it in the first chapter in the letter to the Romans. But now hear this: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, incontinent, despisers of those that are good, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."

Signs of the Times

I do not pause here to venture any opinion, and, as it seems to me, an unprofitable opinion, as to whether or not these signs of the last times are being fulfilled in the signs of our times. I merely point out that both Christ and his apostles foretell a great falling away from faith, and an accompanying corruption of morals at the time of his advent.

CLARENCE E. MACARTNEY

The question of Christ, therefore, about the future of the world has to do, not so much with human progress or decline, but with the increase or the subsidence of faith. Christianity, indeed, will not perish, because the extraordinary and supernatural element which is in it will not permit it to perish. Yet we must not confuse an acceptance of secondary Christianity with the acceptance of primary Christianity. In the words of Vinet, in his "Outlines of Theology," "the time may not be far distant when in a certain sense the whole world will be Christian. But even then, it will not be the fundamental principles, but the secondary ideas, the applications of Christianity that the world will have adopted. The truths which are at the base of the faith of the church will be none the less contrary and odious to the natural man, and while that natural man, of whom even the Christian so long finds some remnant within himself, shall form the majority in this world, so long it is evident must the

church fight and struggle for its very life and suffer therefore even as its head suffered. It is our strength as well as our duty to hope. God wills that we believe all things possible, yea, even in this our world grown old, the possibility of the glory and force of earlier days."

It is conceivable that we might have utopia on the earth with no poverty and no war and no inequality, and yet have a society totally alienated from the mind of God and altogether without faith.

A Faithful Remnant

In conclusion. The teaching of Christ, then, would seem to be that whatever its conquests in the future are to be, at the very last the church will be reduced to a faithful little remnant, and even their faith will be sorely tried. The practical question for us is, What will Christ find in our hearts? Our speculation about the future, its sweep of millennial righteousness, or its retreat and apostasy from faith, for you and me assumes secondary importance to this one question, not, Is the world getting better or worse, but am I? When Peter was curious to know what would happen to John, whether he also was to become a martyr and be bound like Peter and carried whither he would not, Jesus told him to put that out of his mind; his business was to follow Christ. "What is that to thee? Follow thou me."

Because I believe in the Bible, and believe in Christ, and have not yet found a way to be a Christian and at the same time dismiss the words of Christ, I believe that the Son of man will come. He might come in clouds and in glory today. To all of us he is sure to come in death, that coming which is so strikingly advertised to us from day to day, and how often the manner of it, too—in such an hour as ye think not. In that hour, the learning or ignorance, the pride, the experience, the power, the wealth, the wisdom which Christ finds will not matter. What he comes to look for is faith, faith in himself as the Son of God, faith in the forgiveness of sins through his blood shed for atonement on the cross, faith that he will vindicate the truth and avenge his elect, faith in the passing away of the shadow of the darkest night and the deepest evil, faith in God's great tomorrow of righteousness and peace.

Cling to Faith

CLEAVE ever to the sunnier side of doubt,
And cling to faith beyond the forms of faith;
She reels not at the storm of warring words;
She brightens at the clash of "Yes" and "No";
She sees the best that glimmers through the worst;
She feels the sun is hid but for the night;
She spies the summer through the winter bud;
She tastes the fruit before the blossom falls;
She hears the lark within the songless egg;
She finds the fountain where they wailed "Mirage!"

ALFRED TENNYSON.

The Audacity of Faith

BY ALBERT J. MCCARTNEY

Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase which is sealed and this evidence which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days: for thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land. Jeremiah 32:14, 15.

THE history of the Jew, from Genesis to Revelation, is the story of men and women who have won out by giving rein to their instinct for adventure, and who have been willing to take a long chance on the side of God. From Abraham, who left a sure thing in Ur of the Chaldees for the promises of God in an unknown land, and from Moses, who was willing to forego the "treasures of Egypt" for the tribulations of Arabia, all the way to the fishermen of Galilee who forsook their nets for the fellowship of the Master, the Jew has been ready to venture all for the kingdom of God.

In a day when the bottom had dropped out of the real estate market in Jerusalem, Jeremiah predicted that property values would all come back again. A newly rich and pleasure-loving generation had become soft and complacent in their belief that no nation would ever be fool enough to attack Jerusalem. But the armies of Nebuchadnezzar invaded the land, and drove the population of the outlying towns to seek security within the walls of the capital. Because Jeremiah had said that this very thing would happen if the people did not repent and turn from their money-grabbing, their pleasure-seeking and their gross immorality, he was shut up in the guardhouse. Listen to the prophet's description of moral conditions which brought about this disaster: "People refuse to retrace their steps, even when they see plainly that they are in the wrong. . . . They stick to their falsehoods. . . . They pay no attention to the laws of God. . . . There is no word of truth in what they say. . . . Adulterers all of them—a gang of faithless men that pass from one crime to another. . . . You cannot find a penitent man amongst them all. . . . Everyone plunges ahead, like cavalry in charge." (Moffatt.)

A Heartening Prophecy

When conditions in the beleaguered city had reached their revolting and indescribable worst, and wealthy people who had lost all were going about with haggard and drawn faces, Jeremiah prophesied that the tide would turn and property values would come back in Jerusalem and her environs. For when the fury of the storm had spent itself, the love of God shone forth again and the prophet gives us this brighter picture of the restoration: "From of old I love you, so now I draw you gently home. Once more I will settle you, O Maiden Israel. Once more you may take the tambourine and dance merrily. Once more you shall plant

vines on Samaria's hillsides. They shall all come back from the four quarters of the earth, and for them life shall be like a watered garden. No longer shall they pine. The girls shall delight in dancing. Young men and old shall make merry, when I restore their fortunes. Then in Judah's lands and towns once more you shall hear them say as they go and come, 'God bless our home.'" In other words, Jeremiah laid a kind of wager on the side of God that society would again come to itself.

But popular opinion laughed him to scorn. Even his own nephew Hananel visited him in prison and said in substance: "If you are so sure that this is going to happen, you can have my house and lot in the suburbs where Babylonian officers are at present billeted, for half what it is worth. I am going to sell it at any price, but you have the first claim upon it." Jeremiah at once took him up on the offer, bought the property, had the deed signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of all the officials of the guardhouse, and placed it carefully away in a vault against the time to come when he would take possession of the property at its full value. Jeremiah, of course, had no notion of profiting from this real estate venture at the expense of his pessimistic nephew who had thus challenged the sincerity of his faith. He was simply backing up his preaching with his faith, and in buying the Field of Anathoth he was making a splendid gesture of confidence and staking his prophetic reputation upon the future peace and prosperity of the people of God. Events verified his prophecy.

Betting One's Life on God

That is the kind of faith Jeremiah had—a faith that was willing to risk something on the side of God as against the side of the world. I think we all undervalue the element of adventuresomeness in our religion. No one can be dead sure of God beforehand. Religion is an experience. It is a tremendous venture of faith. As Donald Hankey expressed it in one of those sentences of his which fairly bite into the quick: "Religion is betting your life that there is a God." And Christian faith is betting your life that there is the kind of God that Jesus Christ revealed. It is staking all that you have and are on that proposition, and living on that assumption.

The teaching of all this is, of course, very plain and simple. It takes a long reach of faith for us to believe that what today is in the grip of the enemies of God will one day become the possessions of our Lord and of his Christ. It is difficult to believe that things once held so very precious will ever return to their erstwhile value in popular esteem. The beautiful outlying possessions of the City of God have been occupied, trampled, and devoured by the enemies of the spiritual life. Ideals, convictions, standards, institutions of religion once held inviolate have passed from our control, and in our moods of depression we sometimes wonder if we shall ever again hold in our grasp the precious title-deeds to these Christian values, which are now evidently in a falling market.

Every man in the street today has his gods to whom he sacrifices not only his own life, but the lives of his children. A god is something which we admire and before which we bow ourselves in utter devotion—and the name of our gods is legion.

Our Astounding Today

Some worship Our Lady of Riches, to discover eventually that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. Some of us sacrifice continually before the altar of our physical appetites. We seem so elated over our astonishing discovery that the Creator has made us men and women, that we seem to forget that he has made us anything else. Our stage, our music, our books, our billboards, our broadcasting stations, all pour their libations upon the altar of sex, and we stand ready to leap to the platform, the microphone or the newspaper in an enthusiastic defense of our re-vamped paganism. In recent years the cult of cleverness has come into vogue. The witty man has become so raucous that one longs for the company of the nitwits. Tabloid newspapers, clever young journalists, smart-aleck columnists in the daily press and syndicated wise-crackers assume the prerogatives of deity as no prophet of righteousness has ever dared to do. They laugh at preachers and church people who lay such store by the virtues of chastity and Christian dealing in trade, who insist upon modesty in women and the spirit of chivalry in men; and they blatantly declare that these pampered pets of puritanism will never come back. Marriage will never return to a monogamous state. Promiscuity will henceforth be the vogue. The animal instincts in man, so long outraged by the prudish discipline of religion, will now take vengeance upon their traducers by tearing down the marriage altar—and we are going to see to it that it is never rebuilt! "On with the show, let love be without discrimination, and let us all stand up like men and women and defend our position as the will of nature and of God."

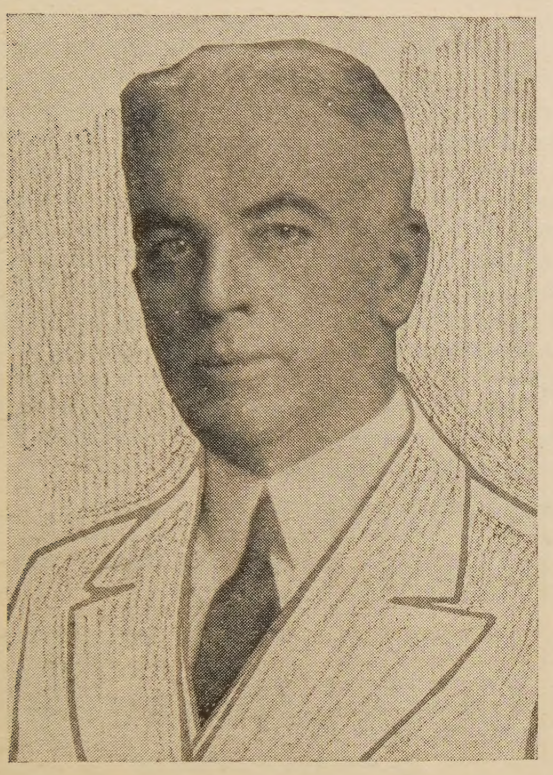
Yet in our saner moments our better instincts assure us that these cults are all petty, ignoble, unworthy of our God-given human nature.

The same thing has happened in the realm of belief, as in the realm of morals. Large areas of Christian belief are already delivered over into the hands of the enemies of God. We are told that their values will never come back. The validity of the church as a redemptive agency is gone, the inspiration of the Bible is a lost cause, the divinity of Jesus Christ is a discredited theory, the offensiveness of sin is a mistaken philosophy and bad psychology. Faith in a life to come is all a pipe-dream. These once cherished beliefs must be given over in favor of a purely humanistic religion. The ancient fundamentals of the faith, for which our fathers fought and died, are in the grip of the enemy. The bottom has fallen out of the market for them, and no one will pay a cent on the dollar for them now.

Selling Short

So it does sometimes seem to us that Hananel, the nephew of Jeremiah, was right. He did the wise thing when he sold short the real estate market in Jerusalem.

The enemies of God have possession of the estate where for so many years I enjoyed the happiness of my home and of my church and of my soul, but I am going to let it go for anything that I can get for it. If Jeremiah wants it he is welcome to it, but my opinion is that it will never be worth a shekel. The simplicity of life will never come back. The happy days when I thought motherhood next to Godhood are gone; those



ALBERT J. MCCARTNEY

days when, too, I would have fought at the drop of a hat had anyone assailed the honor of my sister, or questioned the integrity of my home.

There are times when the advocacy of Christian values seems a hopeless proposition. We go to our country clubs, our theater guilds, our amusement houses, our week-end parties, and we haven't a Christian conviction that dares stand up and show its face. We let our godless friends run away with the whole show, and what amazes us more is the absolute absence of any real sentiment of protest. The fact is, all too many Christian people have surrendered to the lower strata of society. We have capitulated to the spirit of the age. We have become accustomed to speak, to act and to think just as though there were no God. No wonder that sometimes we are oppressed by a sense of the utter futility of trying to stand up against the constant pressure of the majority opinion about us.

My friends, you tell me that the facts do not justify so dark a picture. Look for the good. Turn your face towards the light. Be a Pollyanna. Don't "view with alarm." Who is this new prophet who has come to our city, who goes about peddling pessimism? Well, this is not what I think, and I trust it is not what you think, but it is what we all sometimes feel. I am no "prophet of tears," and I take my stand beside Jeremiah—not the "weeping prophet," as he is unfairly called, but Jeremiah, the world's greatest optimist—who saw things in and about Jerusalem as they really were—the net result of the moral irresponsibility of the people. "Things," said he, "are bad, and they will become worse until you turn to God." The enemies of Jerusalem will sack the city and carry you away, but a time of restoration is sure to come. Land values will all come back. Walls will be rebuilt. Homes will be reinhabited. Vineyards will again be planted. Fields will again wave with the harvest. An era of peace and prosperity will return, and the future, said he, "is as bright as the promises of God."

Is Christianity Done?

I tell you it takes a keen-eyed optimist to gather up the sum total of popular sentiment in newspapers and magazines, to look in upon our pleasures and amusements, to listen in upon the religious life of the average man, and come away with this confidence of Jeremiah for the future. Yet that is the very audacity of faith. For, paint the picture as dark as you like, make the outlook for religion as a vital force in society as discouraging as you please, yet thoughtful people who have plumbed the depths of experience cannot resist the feeling that there is another side, a tremendous other side, to the whole picture.

Is Christianity something past and done with? Or does it still vibrate the deepest undertones in the depths of being? There is something about this simple evangelic tale which the western world has been hearing for fifty generations that has in it a reality that goes beyond all science and philosophy. We of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been privileged to witness more remarkable advance in scientific and theoretic knowledge than has fallen to the lot of any age since the great age of Greece, but we must not assume that, because we know more than our fathers about the movement of the stars and electrons; the inside of the atom and the origin of living organisms; or because we have harnessed to our uses the forces of electricity and radio activity and have conquered the air, that we have therefore any greater insight into the ultimate meaning of life and the ultimate nature of the Most High God. When it is a question of what are the laws of the electrical constitution of matter, or how can I build an internal combustion engine, we have it all over our ancestors; but when it is a question of "what must I do to be saved?" "what is the ultimate purpose of existence?" then we must sit in humility at the feet of Socrates and Marcus Aurelius and Saint Paul and Augustine. For all our inherited mental furniture, what have we really added to the soul's assets, in our vast exploration and exploitation of the material universe?

Rediscovering Jesus

I believe that today we are indubitably making a rediscovery of the spirit of the man Jesus. The sway of the spirit of Christ is becoming more securely established in our international relations, in the social implications of his teachings, in the power to live and in

all the possibilities of faith. As Stanley Jones remarks in his "Christ of the Indian Road," "In the realm of character, Christ has the field."

In that classic of Highland literature, "Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush," Ian Maclaren has a moving chapter entitled, "His Mother's Sermon." The young minister just graduated from Edinburgh had arrived at Drumtochty during the week with his four cart-loads of furniture and a maiden aunt to act as housekeeper. On Friday afternoon he was caressingly handling the completed manuscript of his "grand deliverance" for the following Sunday, his first sermon in his first church. After worship in the evening he and his aunt were musing as they sat together about the fire, both thinking, thinking of the same thing—an incident of five years ago when as they knelt by the bedside of his dying mother she had given him certain words of counsel and certain tokens of her faith and hope for him and said: "Here is my watch and chain, John, and remember, there no will be an hour when I am not praying for you; and if it is the will of God that you enter the ministry, remember, when you stand for the first time in your own kirk, laddie, speak a good word for Jesus Christ." That sentence of this good woman transformed his sermon.

I, too, had a father and a mother, and if, in the dispensations of Almighty God, as I fondly hope and earnestly believe, it be possible for those who have passed from our presence here to be cognizant of the affairs of men below, then there are two unseen but interested witnesses to the events of this day. I know what their united counsel would be—"Don't forget to speak a good word for Jesus Christ." So, standing here in this pulpit, from which for well nigh a half-century there has been proclaimed the blessed gospel of Jesus Christ—standing here in this Church of the Covenant situated in the center of this great throbbing metropolis, standing here in the heart of the capital of our nation, in this nerve center of the world, I count it not only my God-given privilege, but my bounden duty to speak a good word for Jesus Christ—not only the Man of Nazareth who lived among men, but who died for our sins and rose again for our justification.

The Fading Out of the Cross

The doctrine of the cross has all too meager a place in our thinking, our acting and even in our preaching. With much gusto we sing, "Simply to Thy cross I cling," while we cling to anything else but the cross. We cling to the stock market in the hope of retrieving our losses, we cling to the movies to relieve our boredom, we cling to our law commission to save us from crime, to the eighteenth amendment to save us from intemperance, to international conferences to save us from war; but when the cross fades out of the crusader's sky, that cause is as good as lost.

Let us put the wondrous cross back where it belongs. I believe that the tide will turn and the man who holds on and cherishes the Christian values now is the man who will triumph most in that hour. God cannot be defeated, and as sure as we live, popular sentiment will again cherish the Christian virtues and the Christian beliefs, and will underwrite the Christian program. For life without God is becoming more and more intolerable, and the avid hunger for real religion is becoming vocal all about us. With all my heart I want to help. My limitations are legion, and while I am not a light, I can bear witness to that Light, so I consecrate myself to the task and the opportunity to which you have called me, with abounding enthusiasm.

"Religion is betting your life that there is a God," and that he is the kind of God that Jesus Christ revealed. Infidelity can never hold the field against the mustered instincts of the soul. How does it stand with you, my friend? Are you willing to bet your life that Jesus Christ is right, to stake your all on him against the world? How much am I bid for the Field of Anathoth, that our godless cousins in the world hold so cheap? How much will you still pay for your integrity of character? How much are you willing to give for the sanctity of your home? How much am I bid for the virtue of your daughters? How much for the chastity of your sons? How much for the modesty of our mothers? How much for the chivalry of our fathers? O, Field of Anathoth, you are mine. I hold you by the title deeds of an audacious faith. I bet my life on God. I stake my all on Jesus Christ.

> The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
> I will not, I will not, desert to its foes;
> That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
> I'll never, no never, no never forsake.

God's Laboratory

By Arthur P. Vaughn

Law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ. Gal. 3:24.

WE ARE inclined to place a depreciating value on the college that today furnishes only theory without practical laboratory training, without actual experience in handling apparatus and thereby learning the laws and proving the dependability of the laws that control all material substance. Our schools often have marvelous and costly equipment to supply such practical training to our children. Thereby the cost of educating a child has multiplied rapidly to many times the figure requisite only a generation ago. We approve the expense on the ground that the young personality must be deprived of nothing that may aid it in realizing its best self and building its best possible success in life. It must have every chance to attain to fullest capability, highest quality, complete realization and experience.

What the Laboratory Is For

The laboratory, however diversified and elaborate its appointments, has no other reason for being than to further this end. When the uneducated child is put into the school laboratory the purpose is not that he shall improve, or further increase, or in any way bene-

fit the equipment of the school. He will almost certainly misuse it through ignorance and lack of skill. The purpose is not that he shall use the equipment productively, manufacturing goods to enrich the school. The purpose is not that he shall acquire that equipment as his own property and so enrich himself. The purpose in his being there is, by experience in handling that equipment, to waken to life and then develop his own potentialities and talents, to learn obedience by working with material objects that obey the universal laws of their nature, laws inbuilt by the Creator in every member of the close-knit, integrated whole of all-things-working-together-for-good. These material objects, the child learns, can function rightly only as they obey such laws; thus learns control of himself by controlling this material equipment under law. As he learns obedience and control he finds his place and function in the working together of all things, as planned by the Maker. He begins "to see life steadily and see it whole." He begins to conceive of his own life in terms of the universe, of his inter-related privileges and obligations as an essential unit of the whole of things.

That is culture. That is the way leading to maturity and perfectness of life. With material symbols he works his equation, his own solution of the ultimate problem, "What doth God require of thee?" Nothing in the machinery around the child, but he himself, his possible perfected self, is the intended product of that school laboratory. Within himself, in permanent ability, character and personality, is the only enrichment that a laboratory is designed and assembled and operated to produce.

In all this new appreciation of the value of laboratory experience we are only learning, tardily, God's methods of training. The essential man is spirit, an embryo spirit, with capabilities latent and powers undeveloped; but, having life, he anticipates maturity, he is perfectable.

But why should *spirits* for their training be put into bodies of material flesh, lodged inescapably in a schoolroom filled with material objects that they cannot es-

A Pastoral Prayer

By Ernest Bourner Allen

ALMIGHTY and ever-gracious God our Father, once more we bow our hearts together in worship, with gratitude for this opportunity of renewed fellowship with Thee and with one another. We have no special merit which makes us worthy of Thy favor. We are conscious of the many forgiving mercies of Thy love. For the cleansing and steadying influence of this worship-time we thank Thee.

We bring Thee our lives, today, asking that Thou wilt chasten and strengthen them. Make them more like the life of our Lord Jesus in attitude, in devotion, in passion and in service. Wherever we go, may men thus catch something of His vision and find a new courage for their lives.

We bring Thee our church today, our Father, asking that Thou wilt penetrate and deepen its inner life. Grant that we may have a more prayerful devotion. Teach us how to work together. Help us to realize the multiplied power which may come through our union in service. Grant us an increasing spirit of friendliness, of unselfishness and of Christian love.

We bring Thee our homes and our children, our Father. They are our choicest treasure and for them we would put other things aside. However pressing the claims of business and other things may be, help us to keep the home fires burning with brightness and love. May we live so that our children shall grow in Thy knowledge and love Thy service, because they see in us the beauty and joy of Christian living.

We bring Thee our country, our Father, with its great problems which no form of political action can solve. Help those to whom the responsibilities of leadership are given. May they walk humbly before Thee and seek to do Thy will. Help us to bring to those who love righteousness every reinforcement in our power. Help the people who are unemployed, we pray Thee, and grant that they may not give up to discouragement or bitterness. Give our leaders wisdom to devise ways and means whereby the burden of financial distress may be lifted from those least able to bear it. Help us to carry the spirit of sympathy and encouragement to all who toil.

We bring Thee our world, our Father, with all its feverish unrest, its passion for freedom, its eagerness for things, its poorly expressed and often unuttered longing for Thee. Help us to see the world with compassion and longing, as our Lord Jesus saw it. So may we act like Christian brothers and neighbors to all men everywhere, regardless of race or creed. Let Thy joy be known more fully in this world of passion and unrest, so that Thy kingdom may come and Thy will be done everywhere.

We bring Thee this new year of our church-home life, our Father. Let it not be a meaningless or conventional year in service. Give us to seek and do the things that are worth while and to lay aside the things that are not worth while. And when for us "the shadows lengthen and the evening falls and the busy world is hushed and life's fitful fever is over and our work is done," grant us a safe lodging and rest at the last, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

cape handling, that they must use, well or ill, every moment until their spirits leave the flesh again? Why?

If the Maker, the Lifegiver, have intelligence and power and goodwill, he put human spirits to school in this laboratory, the earth of material substance in myriad forms, because here, better than in any other environment, such spirits may realize and perfect themselves. Conceivably God might have placed us in the school of the angels, for a spiritual culture that included no contact with any material substance; a spiritual education without laboratory experience. Instead, and because it was best for us, the Supreme Teacher put us to school in bodies of flesh, in a room so crowded with solid material equipment that we will collide with its sharp angles with every heedless movement.

To the untrained child, while he is learning, the school laboratory is a confusing, often exasperating and dangerous place. He can come upon accident and injury there. The machinery, wrongly used, is perilous. But there he learns obedience by the things which he suffers. Learns *there,* or *nowhere;* and not learning, he goes out lawless in God's ordered universe; and, because lawless, of necessity impotent.

Life Is a Laboratory

God built this laboratory for training *man.* There is no hint that it will have a later or superior use. No higher or more perfect product has yet been glimpsed by science, philosophy or religion. God assembled it at enormous cost of time. The equipment is complete; it offers some contrivance exactly fitted to engage and exercise and mature every latent human talent. The material equipment itself has marvelous beauty to charm us, comfort to beguile us, mystery to intrigue us, if we consider only these things. Many men seem content just to enjoy the laboratory, to use it as clubroom and dormitory, rather than an apparatus for eagerly learning skill and power. Some find nothing that grips their interest and are bored for means to occupy their time. Many men use this laboratory as though the objective were some change or remodeling done to the equipment itself, manufacturing different or more valuable material apparatus. Many men toil and fight to acquire sole control or individual possession and property in some special bit of the equipment —to own a piece of the earth, small or large.

That is not at all the purpose or the method of the laboratory.

All this school equipment—clays and metals, marbles and jewels, forests, fabrics and foods—*can not, as material substance,* enrich man's spirit. They can become the tool, by handling which his spirit grows its faculties and develops quality and enrichment within itself. All that we may acquire in our years spent in God's laboratory will be our experience and skill in self-mastery, and hoarded spiritual values. Leaving school we will not carry out with us one least item of the equipment we have used in getting our training, not one smallest instrument, not one disc of the gold with which we have done so much experimenting. But if we carry out a knowledge of the law, and skill in obedience to the law, we shall be very rich, and the laboratory will have fully served its Maker's purpose. However lavishly equipped, the laboratory has value only as it turns forth a cultured spirit, a product of a higher order of value.

In Honore Willsie Morrow's recently published story of Adoniram Judson's mission in Burma, we have a most vivid picture of a soul that struggled through a

Arthur P. Vaughn

rigorous, intense training in a laboratory that seemed wholly inimical. To me the very moving climax, both of drama and of writing, in the book is reached in the quiet twilight scene under "the old Moulmein pagoda looking westward to the sea," when Judson met the high Buddhist official, who, he knew, had violently opposed his work from the beginning and persecuted his converts. "You call my religion sad," he said to the Burman, "but I call yours empty—utter negation." He referred to the Buddhist high road to Nirvana, emptying self of every hunger, every aspiration, thus becoming fitted for escape, losing personality, leaving behind every possibility of experience of conscious suffering or glory. "I suppose," he continued, "life was given us to live—not escape."

"Ah, but what is life?" asked the ancient Buddhist. The worldwide, race-old question. Judson sighed.

"It must be something very precious, because God gave it to his Son as a supreme experience. And as one of God's possessions it is not to be scorned. Life is knowledge. It is not escape. It is not running away to a hermitage, hiding from the world where experience can not touch us. Life *is* experience, reaching ever farther, gathering always more and assimilating it, accepting and using all the world offers. It is not escape. It is knowing what Christ knew. And he

turned his head from nothing except causing suffering in others. When he said, 'I am Life,' he told me all."

Not Escape, but Experience

Christ became obedient to every experience that man could compass; obedient to all suffering; obedient to the bodily dissolution which terminates human experience. So he fulfilled human experience—I am life. "He though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered." Life is not escape—it is experience. "It was befitting that the All-Creator, in bringing many sons into glory, should make the Wayfinder of their salvation perfect through sufferings." If human lives are to come to complete fulfillment, to utmost experience, the Man who first searches out the Way to that goal, and by arriving proves that it reaches that goal, the Man who blazes the way that others may follow confidently, the Wayfinder, will reach this wholeness and perfection of life by obedience and suffering. "Something very precious, because God gave it to his Son as a supreme experience!" Having experienced, the Son of Man could say, I am the Way; I am Life!

Our sure path to life's goal and glory therefore is by this marked path—to accept experience as he accepted it, to learn obedience to the will of God in all the integrated order of creation as he learned obedience, to know all earth has to teach us. For the material earth is God's laboratory in which he has placed us for training, for the germinating and development of our spiritual faculties and energies.

How much has the use of this material equipment really availed us toward mastering the final lesson of right living? Some of the great names in the physical sciences assert that there is no help towards that end to be found in science. Lord Haldane says that science deals only with what was, what is and what will be, not what ought to be; that we need not expect science to give us a standard of action or to provide the effective incentive to secure its practical realization; that it can not be even an aid to virtue. Let us think carefully before accepting such a word.

Science is our schoolroom notebook, containing the total mass of observed facts as to how this equipment around us functions. Does it give us reliable knowledge of what the Maker designed it to accomplish?

What Science Does

Science furnishes us knowledge of the behavior of the material creation, of the obedience of non-living material elements to universal law, in which obedience they set an example for us, observing, rational, self-determining personalities, to follow in obeying from conscious choice the laws of our best development and most perfect interdependent cooperation; laws fitted to our nature by the same Creator who wove the material creation in a mesh of law suited to and necessary to its complete functioning. Science thus has a part, a teacher's part, if we have open minds, in guiding us toward virtue that is a quality of spiritual beings. If all this material equipment in the great laboratory operates best under absolute law, we, the pupils, learn reverence for law. Reasoning with precision, we may expect law to condition the spiritual, more valuable order of existence also. Reasonably we may expect that we too have a certain, intended place in the vast design of all things working together, and that in accepting and obeying the law we in our station may function perfectly in the Creator's design. The law becomes a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ—and I refer to the latest discovered law of chemistry, electricity or physics.

In this schoolroom science trains us in the accurate, efficient handling of the equipment. By trained obedience to the laws discovered in the material world we become habituated to law, and will use that habit and method in meeting the problems and decisions of spiritual life. The scientist who follows natural laws unquestioningly, but who, the moment he faces spiritual behavior, renounces obedience, throws his scientific method into the discard, and becomes lawless and unmoral, is an anomaly and a fool. He has flung to the winds his lessons of the laboratory.

Law a Tutor

God is One and there is no other. Of all spiritual beings the Lifegiver; of all material substance in all systems and galaxies the Creator, our God is One. All his works are interwoven; all his laws, in material substance and in the spiritual order, are attuned and blend in one harmony. Following the path of law through the material elements, and beyond their boundary, following the same path in continuity, we reach and traverse the spiritual realm. Law becomes our tutor in a discipline that does the will of God in earth as it is done in heaven.

Through recognition of and reverence for his eternal laws, God leads mankind to higher levels through processes that overreach our understanding. We learn at best very slowly; often we refuse to learn at all. But God is patient; through the ages he teaches without wearying. He varies the lesson and experiments to suit the need and competence of every pupil; but his eternal purpose never changes, because his plan is complete and perfect. The laboratory in which he trains us can not be bettered.

Such training must be very precious: God gave it to his Son—gives it to all his sons—as a supreme experience.

The Light of Life

I KNOW not what shall be,
But fear dwells not with me,
For in Him,
When earth lamps all are dim,
The light of life I see—
Love
Above
All things this earth upon;
And I follow Him
Trustingly
On and on.

THOMAS CURTIS CLARK.

Christianity According to Paul

By Douglas C. Macintosh

Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love. I Corinthians, 13:13.

THERE have been a great many books and articles in recent years discussing "the essence of Christianity," and much attention is still being devoted to the question of "the finality of the Christian religion." These terms, "essence" and "finality" are not to be found in the New Testament; but, if I mistake not, the essence of Christianity is just what Paul is setting forth, and the finality of the Christian religion is precisely what he is asserting in the familiar words I have chosen as my text.

The essence of anything, in the good sense, is that in it which has finality, that which abides because it is fit to abide. The essence of Christianity is that in actual, historical Christianity which it is and always will be essential to retain, that which survives and can survive because it has final value and validity. And in the thought of Paul this abiding essence of the Christian spirit and way of life was summed up in that ever-blessed trinity of Christian virtues, faith, hope and love.

Leaving Some Things Behind

There were many things about the religion of his fathers which Paul had already left behind as unessential, and some things even about the new religion, of which he was the outstanding representative, that he was ready to see left behind with the lapse of time. The Jewish law with its prescribed sacrifices and other elements of the temple ritual should not, he insisted, be regarded as an essential part of the Christian religion. "Circumcision is nothing" is his terse comment on what had been, time out of mind, a sacred custom. The traditional ceremonial taboos meant little to him. He refused to separate himself from the Gentiles in eating, and like that other radical who was understood as "making all meats clean," he could see and say that "nothing is unclean of itself." Even the practice of observing days and months and seasons and years he thought of but lightly; it belonged to the "weak and beggarly rudiments" of religion. One man might esteem one day above another as a holy day; another might regard all days alike as holy. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind, and yet, on matters of such secondary importance, let all agree to disagree. Even the Christian rite of baptism Paul seems to have regarded as of minor consequence in comparison with the spiritual content of the gospel; if he had not, he could scarcely have thanked God that he had baptized only a few of the Corinthian converts.

Similarly, in the text before us and its context Paul indicates his attitude toward certain "gifts of the Spirit," as they were called, particularly the greatly coveted "speaking with tongues." That this was a genuine gift of the Spirit Paul was not in a position to deny; but he could easily see that it had no essential or final importance. "I speak with tongues more than you all," he roundly declares, "but I would rather speak five words so as to be understood than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." "Whether there be tongues, they shall cease."

"Prophecies," special inspirational utterances, so spoken that they *could* be understood, were to be regarded more highly than the so-called gift of tongues, but even such prophecies were not the essential thing. They were but partial and inadequate expressions of an unspeakable experience. "Whether there be prophecies, they shall pass away."

"Knowledge"

And with prophecies Paul couples *gnosis,* "knowledge"—often falsely so-called—speculative interpretations of or additions to the faith, often far-fetched and fantastic, upon which the philosophically inclined so prided themselves. Such supposed knowledge, at best a very incomplete grasping of the truth and often of doubtful validity, was not for Paul one of the essentials of the Christian religion. It, too, should be superseded and done away.

"Prophecies" in the sense of inspirational religious utterances have furnished much of the raw material out of which ecclesiastical rules of conduct have been made, and such prophecies, together with "knowledge" in the sense of speculative interpretations of the faith, have provided the raw material out of which ecclesiastical creeds have been constructed. Similarly, spontaneous expressions of religious feeling, of which "speaking with tongues" was a very extreme illustration, are the raw material out of which religious rituals are woven together. But all such manufactured codes, creeds and ritual forms, however fixed and final they may be intended to be, must be expected, sooner or later, to show signs of disintegration. They are not the abiding essence of Christianity. Whether there be codes of duties, they shall fail to fit some future occasion; whether there be ritual forms, they shall cease to be effective; whether there be creeds and confessions of faith, they shall come to seem antiquated and be revised or rejected. But faith, hope, love—these three will remain; they are the abiding elements of Christianity.

Let us look more closely into these abiding elements, this permanent essence of the Christian religion, as Paul has stated it. There is more in Christian faith than mere belief, or opinion; more in Christian hope than mere desire and expectation; more in Christian charity, or love, than mere kindly feeling. Faith, hope and love are principles of active life; they involve an attitude and activity of the will. There is a *"work* of faith," as Paul reminds us, a *"labor* of love," and a *"patience* of hope."

"And the greatest of these is love." Let us turn then first to that. The love of which Paul speaks is not a mere feeling or emotion, like the sentimental pity which would say, "Depart in peace; be thou warmed and fed," without doing anything for the needy; it is good will, expressing itself in action. Of course right feeling must be there; alms-giving, the apostle reminds us, is no sure indication of a charitable heart. But generally speaking, if the will is right toward one's fellows, and if the good will is given

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appropriate expression in action, one's feelings may almost be left to take care of themselves; they will tend to be what they ought to be. Love, or charity, in the sense in which Paul uses them, is entering sympathetically, through imagination and painstaking thought, into the lives of others, and doing for them not necessarily what they desire but what is truly desirable, in so far as that is possible. In short, true love is a root of which unselfish service is the fruit, and by its fruits we may know it.

This at any rate is what Paul seems to have meant by the word which is translated "charity" in the authorized version, and "love" in the revised. Broader than charity, it is love at its highest. Through love be servants one to another, is the apostle's exhortation. Do that which is good toward all men. Let all that ye do be done in love. It is not good to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth. Follow after the things which make for peace and edification. Bless them that persecute you. Render to no man evil for evil. If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. Overcome evil with good. Love suffereth long, and is kind; is not provoked; is not always noticing evil, imputing evil motives, and taking offense. Love worketh no ill. It worketh, however. It is the fulfilling of the law, not a substitute for such fulfillment.

This was not with Paul a matter of precept alone; it was his own daily practice. Like his Master, he went about doing good, not seeking his own profit, but the profit of the many. Night and day he worked that he might not be a burden to any. "Most gladly will I spend and be spent for your souls"—thus he wrote the Corinthians. He regarded himself as debtor to Greeks and barbarians, to wise and foolish. He gave himself in unselfish service, soul and body, a living sacrifice. He bore about in his body "the marks of the Lord Jesus," and in his mind a burden of anxiety for all the churches. Well might he write of love. He knew it as few others did. It was his daily life.

A Living Sacrifice

This unselfish love, this altruistic service, is in Paul's opinion the greatest thing in Christianity, the greatest thing in the world. But Christian social service and the Christian social gospel, be it remembered, are not exclusively concerned with the economic, political and physical well-being of mankind. These are indeed important, as means if not as ends in themselves; but the central interests from the Christian point of view are the development of character, culture of spirit, and the establishing of right personal relations between man and man and between man and God. These are the things which are of supreme and permanent importance in human life, and thus deeply interpreted the ideal of social service needs to be stressed anew as against the tendency of many in our day to turn back to a selfish and would-be aristocratic individualism, a movement of which the major prophet is Nietzsche, and not Christ.

This is not to say that there is no place in Christianity for individualism. Insofar as individualism means individual freedom and initiative as against external authority and mere herd-morality, let us be, as we should be, for it; but as bearers of the name Christian we have no right to follow the false prophet Nietzsche who promised the evolution of the Superman out of the selfish, individualistic struggle for power, for domination over the lives of others. As well might we expect to gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles as expect to establish the kingdom of God on earth by means of ruthless individualism, commercialism, imperialism, militarism, and war—even "a war to end war." In the spirit of Paul we may ask, what concord hath Christ with Nietzsche, who could say that a good war would sanctify any cause, and who regarded the Christian morality of love and service to all as the supreme evil and an enemy of the human race?

Learning from Enemies

It may be said that Nietzsche has something to teach us. That is true; we can often learn a great deal from our enemies. But that does not necessarily mean that

in what is most fundamental they are not still our enemies. But the highest and greatest good, not of an aristocratic few, but of all who are to be affected by the consequences of our conduct; the well-being of future generations as well as of persons now living; the promotion of active good will between different social, industrial, and economic classes, and between different races and nations as well as between individuals—all this is included in the ideal which Christianity sets before us; and how can it, or any part, fail to be an object of interest to every person of good will?

But the social gospel, even when interpreted in the most spiritual sense, is not the whole gospel. Religion at its best includes among its abiding elements, not only unselfish love, a love which extends to God as well as to man, but religious hope and a personal religious faith as well. At its best, religious hope is an attitude of mind which leads to strenuous and patient activity for the highest ends, combined with a confident willingness to leave all that is beyond our human power to an absolutely trustworthy superhuman Reality. It is hope within moral conditions, optimism within the limits of full recognition of man's moral freedom and responsibility. As we see it exemplified in Paul, hope is a constant support and at the same time a constant spur to moral activity. All things, he is confident, are working together for good to those who are in the right attitude of heart and will toward God and his will.

There is assurance also of ultimate success in the Christian life. Not even the most devoted Christian can say, I have attained and am complete; but one can be confident that he who has begun in men the good work of individual education, deliverance from evil and spiritual development will carry on the process he has begun. Nothing but man's free will, not even the death of the body, can hinder this good work of God. Moreover, when stricken and bereaved, the man of truly Christian outlook sorrows not as those who have no hope. He is assured that this mortal shall put on immortality in order that God may continue to work in the individual both to will and to do according to the pleasure of his good will.

Faith More Than Belief

But among the abiding essentials of Christianity Paul enumerates not only love and hope, but faith as well. Now faith is not for Paul mere belief or mere assent to a doctrinal statement. "With the *heart* man believeth *unto righteousness,*" and as in the case of love, which is "the fulfilling of the law," so here, "we *establish the law* through faith." Faith is the attitude of mind and will which finds and must find expression in true prayer, and true prayer in turn is the right religious adjustment. This right religious adjustment, which is the essence of true prayer and true faith, involves the soul's sincere desire that God's will, that is, what is right, may be done not only to us and about us, but in us and through us. It involves turning in heart and mind to God, and more than this, the giving of ourselves with abandon to God and his good will, that he may do for us as we need, and with us as he will. It involves an appropriating of the divine spirit and power, which we need in order to maintain the good will within us. It involves a responsiveness to God insofar as he is revealed to us, a willingness to do and an actual beginning to do his will.

And finally, it involves persistence in this attitude with an honest intention to persevere therein to the end of life. In due time such an attitude will not fail of its reward. All resistance will be overcome and the desired results will begin to appear; namely, deliverance from moral evil, the promotion of good will, and strength of spirit to follow the dictates of an enlightened conscience and to be not weary in well doing. It is this, and not the mere deliverance from postmortem pains, which is the true and essentially Christian experience of salvation. Moreover, this moral salvation is a salvation which comes through faith only insofar as by faith is meant the right religious adjustment. It is what Paul referred to in the prayer, "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."

The Essence of Christianity

That Christ may dwell in your hearts! Let us look a little into the meaning of this strange expression. We have seen, with Paul, that the essential and abiding content of Christianity consists of three principal elements; namely, hope—an optimism within strictly moral limits, but a Christian optimism, nevertheless, with its postulates of the God we need and a future life for further opportunity for activity and development; faith, or the right religious adjustment, with the experience of moral salvation to which it leads; and love, or unselfish social service, with its issue in the progressive realization of the kingdom of God on earth. But faith, hope and love were unified and made concrete for Paul's thought in the figure of Christ.

For Paul then, whatever else he may have meant by the phrase, to speak of Christ or the Spirit in the life was another way of saying that the person had in his life the Christian virtues of faith, hope and love. "To me to live is Christ," he could say. "Christ liveth in me." "We have the mind of Christ." "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

But did Paul think of the historic Jesus, whom he identified with the Christ, as himself having in his own life these same virtues of an essentially Christian faith, hope and love? We can unhesitatingly answer in the affirmative with reference to love, the greatest of the three. The apostle felt constrained to follow in the pathway of unselfish love when he thought of the love of Christ, who "pleased not himself," but "gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us from this present evil world." Paul must have gained his knowledge of the kind of person Jesus was largely from Peter, James and John, and others who had been intimately acquainted with the Master, and it is significant that the impression he gained from them was that Jesus "knew no sin."

Moreover, it is not at all unlikely that it was Jesus

Christ of whom Paul was thinking when he wrote, "Love suffereth long and is kind; love envieth not; vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Similarly, we may think that he had Jesus in mind when he exhorted the Colossian Christians to put on "a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance and forgiveness, and, above all, *love,* the bond of completeness," and also when he listed the fruits of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control." And such a spirit of unselfish love and unassuming brotherliness, we may feel sure, the actual, historic Jesus exemplified.

Jesus a Religious Person

Paul has little to say or even to suggest with reference to faith and hope as characteristics of the religious life of the man Jesus. This does not mean, of course, that these virtues were not there, but only that Jesus Christ was to Paul so pre-eminently an object of faith and hope, that he did not ordinarily think of the man Jesus as being himself a *subject* of faith, a religious individual, and one who needed to be supported, and was supported, by faith and hope. But that the historic Jesus was a religious person, a man of faith and hope in essentially the sense in which we have been using these terms, there is every reason for us to believe.

He lived in an attitude of filial love, trust and submission to God as his Father. This is indicated by the teaching, "your Father in heaven is perfect," by the exhortation to love God with all one's heart, and indeed throughout the stories of Jesus which have come down to us, beginning with his question as a child, "Where would you expect to find me? I was interested in things which concern my Father in heaven," and ending with the last expiring cry, "Father, into thy hand I commend my spirit." We are repeatedly told of his habits of prayer. "Pray to thy Father who is in secret," he advises, "and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee." "Seek and ye shall find," he testifies; "knock and it shall be opened unto you." These are the words of one who had found the right religious adjustment, that attitude of soul which is the heart of all true prayer and faith.

Jesus a Man of Hope

Just as certainly may we believe that Jesus was a man of religious hope. As for his cause, the kingdom of God on earth, his parables of the sower, the mustard seed, the leaven, and the patient husbandman seem undoubtedly meant to teach a hopeful attitude as to the outlook. It was not an unconditional optimism, to be sure. He was optimistic only within the limits set by knowledge of the free agency of man and the exceeding seriousness of sin; his optimism had moral limits. As for his own future, while he looked forward to his early death at the hands of his enemies, he seems nevertheless to have been assured that through God he would rise triumphant over all that death could do to him. And with his faith and confident hope he sought to inspire his rather timid disciples. "Why are ye fearful?" he asked. "Have ye not yet faith?" "Be not anxious for your life." "Fear not them that kill the body and after that have no more that they can do." "Follow me." "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." "Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Jesus is not only an object of Christian faith and hope and love. He is this because he was himself a subject of faith and hope and love; a man of unselfish devotion to human good, of the ethical optimism which must ultimately believe in God and immortality, and of such an assurance of faith and such spiritual power as could only be born of a diligent cultivation of the right religious adjustment. Well might Paul identify the Christian faith and hope and love with the presence of the spirit of Jesus Christ. There, indeed, was the concrete embodiment of these essential and abiding values.

This, then, is the abiding essence of Christianity: faith, or the right religious adjustment; hope, or moral optimism; and love, or devotion to the welfare of humanity. Christianity, as Paul so clearly saw, is faith, hope, love, these three; or the spirit of the historic Jesus, in whom above all others we find them. Thus understood, essential Christianity is seen to have universal and final validity. This is what will abide. This alone can be the religion of the future; this only is qualified to be the religion of the world.

Forever Getting Ready

By Ilion T. Jones

Wayward creatures of impulse, who are always curious to learn and never able to attain the knowledge of the truth. 2 *Timothy* 3:7 (*Moffatt*).

FREQUENTLY little children at play spend a long period of time preparing for a game and by the time the preparation is made, begin to plan something else—forever "fixing" to play but never really playing. There is a story of a young minister who spent so much time working out an efficient system for sermonizing—indexing and filing his material—that he had little time left to actually do the sermonizing. Against this sort of person, who is forever getting ready but never actually does the thing for which he has been so assiduously preparing, Paul warned young Timothy. He calls all such "wayward creatures of impulse, who are always

curious to learn and never able to attain the knowledge of the truth."

It is as though a doctor were forever preparing to practice medicine, but never quite arrives at any certain, definite knowledge which gives him assurance and justifies accepting a patient. Or, as though a lawyer were getting ready to practice law, but never becomes convinced that there is any such thing as principle of law, sufficiently valid at least, to apply to human conduct. Such people remind us of a Milton getting ready to write a poem that England will not willingly let die, but never applying himself to the actual work of writing; or of a congressional investigating committee which continuously reports, "We are still at work, but we have not arrived at any conclusions."

Purveyors of New Ideas

We have their counterpart today. They are enthusiastic purveyors of novel ideas. But, because the task of actually arriving at the truth is so exacting, they never pursue any one train of thought long enough to arrive at a well-founded conclusion. They never sustain effort for a sufficient length of time to reach a definite, well-fortified position. So it becomes an habitual morning salutation of their friends, "What new idea are you peddling this morning?"

Our age is especially productive of the type. Everything is undergoing such thorough scrutiny, so many of our cherished traditions are being questioned and dissected with such scientific rigor, that we have produced a generation of people who are, perhaps, the most cruelly and coldly and dispassionately investigative known, but who with great difficulty ever reach conclusions. Our cry is, "We are still waiting for the facts on which to make up our minds about these important personal and social questions." Knowledge is accumulating rapidly, so rapidly, in fact, that it is not being assimilated, classified, and related to previous knowledge with sufficient care so that we can quickly come to the conclusions.

I

One of the noble characteristics of our generation is the manner in which we encourage our growing youth to take nothing on mere authority but to convince themselves, by their own investigations, of the truth or of the falsity of the opinions of others, even the opinions that have been inherited in the form of traditions from other generations. We have more investigating committees, more laboratory experiments, more research bureaus, perhaps, than any age preceding ours. Of this fact we may justly be proud. We may even rejoice that religious traditions are no exception to the rule, that the Bible has been subjected to the most minute historical criticism, that the scholars are putting our conceptions of God, and morals, and Christ, and religious sanctions, in the test tube and under the microscope. A science or a religion that will not bear investigation, and rigid investigation, does not deserve to stand. "The real skeptic," says Ernest Fremont Tittle, "is the man who has so little faith in his own position that he is afraid to have it critically examined; who has so little confidence in truth that he fears to have more of it discovered; who is tormented by the thought that if he knew more he might believe less."

Moreover, we need honest doubters. Tennyson was right when he said that there is sometimes more faith in honest doubt than in half our creeds. Pasteur's famous dictum may well be applied even to our cherished

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beliefs: "In experimental science it is always a mistake not to doubt when facts do not compel affirmation." Did not Einstein, when asked how he discovered the law of relativity, say, "By challenging an axiom"?

> I had six honest serving men;
> (They taught me all I knew):
> Their names are What and Why and When,
> And How and Where and Who.

These six serving men of Kipling are essential to human progress.

One of the discouraging and hampering characteristics of present day religion is that too many of us are afraid to bring our religion under the scrutiny of the man who says, "I cannot affirm; but I am willing to investigate." Unless we are willing to re-examine the bases of our faith, re-arrange thinking so as to bring it into harmony with facts, even with modern terminology and categories, we can expect to produce a large group of confirmed skeptics.

II

Gladly, then, do we submit our most sacred beliefs to the investigators; provided, however, they remem-

ber that research is designed to reach a destination. An honest agnostic is one who says, "I do not know. I am withholding judgment until I find out." Such an attitude is commendable if he is really willing to submit to the discipline of finding out. Agnosticism is not a destination but a state of mind where one temporarily rests on the way to truth. Thought moves, or should move, steadily along its tracks to a conclusion. Knowledge is not gathered for its own sake but as a means of arriving at truth.

When a young person informs us that he is studying the Bible, we can but reply, "That's fine, that's commendable. Keep on studying it. But do not stop at the halfway house. Keep on studying until you reach a conclusion." So many people, in studying the Bible, do stop on the way. They stop at an Old Testament idea that we have long ago outgrown or discarded; at a literary discrepancy, or a scientific theory of the universe long ago left behind in the forward march of progress; at some unimportant detail of doctrine or vagary of thought, no longer significant, held by an ancient author. By all means let the Bible be dissected. But let us be sure the dissection is for the purpose of discovering its beauty and truth. And both the beauty and the truth are there. They emerge at every stage. They stare at you from every page. They cry out from the very dust into which you trample the book, or the secluded shelf on which you have discarded it. Any honest and sincere investigation of the Book of books will invariably end in acknowledge its truth.

Truth and Practice

In reality a truth is never known until it is practiced, until it is tested in experience. "He that willeth to do shall know." When a young college man, Horace Bushnell decided to begin to live by what he believed instead of publishing to the other students what he did not believe or could not affirm. Living by his affirmations, he found them growing and increasing in number. Carlyle's famous utterance comes with force to a hesitating age, which finds it difficult to make up its mind: "Do the duty which lies nearest thee, which thou knowest to be a duty! Thy second duty will already have become clearer."

By all means then let our age search for the truth. But whoever searches for the truth should also be getting ready to put that truth into practice. The challenge of Christ to our investigative age is: Get ready to live, but when the preparation days are fulfilled, begin to live.

Lead on, O King Eternal,
The day of march has come;
Henceforth in fields of conquest
Thy tents shall be our home.

Through days of preparation
Thy grace has made us strong,
And now, O King Eternal,
We lift our battle song.

The Supreme Task of Life

By M. Russell Boynton

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2 *Corinthians* 4:16.

THIS takes us at once into the inner life of man, which, after all, is the reality of a man's life. It is not our clothes, our houses, or our other possessions that are most real to us, but it is our problems, our affections, our aspirations, that endless debate that goes on within our very selves, that scheming and planning, that wistful hoping, that sense of well-being which comes over us in the presence of friends and loved ones, all of this constantly changing drama that goes on in the heart and mind of man constitutes our real life. It is this that we think of first when we think of our very selves.

But it is the fact that our real self is hidden from the gaze of the outside world that produces all of those misunderstandings and that lack of sympathy and appreciation which constitute one of the great problems of every life. If people would only understand, if they would only appreciate that the things which they bitterly criticize are sprung from worthy and noble motives, how much easier would living be. But our real lives are hidden. They belong to the realm of the unseen, and we spend much of our time and energy in trying to reveal to the outside world that which is hidden within us, and we find it a most difficult task. But notwithstanding its difficulty we never doubt for a moment its reality. The real person is not compounded of flesh and bones and material possessions, but he is compounded of spiritual qualities, loves and affections, purposes and desires, hopes and fears.

What Is the Self?

This is a very simple and a very obvious truth and the wonder is that its plain analogy as a means for interpeting the world in which we live is so very frequently overlooked. Just because we find difficulty in revealing and understanding the spiritual life in its human and worldly relationship, so must we also expect to find even greater difficulties when we come to study the spiritual truths of the universe. But just as, notwithstanding this difficulty, we believe that in human relationships there is nothing so real as this inner hidden spiritual life, so must we also be convinced that these spiritual relationships are no less real and no less significant.

Now out of this very simple analogy from every man's life, it seems to me that we find the interpreta-

tion of all that is most significant in the world. The immediate problem of every individual is to reveal his true life to others, and to discover the true life of his fellow men. But he cannot stop there. He is deeply conscious of powers and influences that are cosmic and universal in their scope, that far transcend his own life or the life of mankind, and he recognizes that while these powers are akin to his own, they are infinitely larger and more important, and so he comes to believe that the highest purpose of his life is to discover and understand this spiritual reality which presses upon his life from every side, and that, after all, the greatest problem of any human life is the discovery of the meaning of these great spiritual powers. This is evidently what we are here for. This is the task of every man. And I want to suggest that there are three ways through which we approach an understanding of the spiritual realities of life.

I

In the first place, there is the approach through character. A children's playground is one of the busiest and most significant places in the world. The superficial observer may think that its only business is to make noise, but anybody who understands, knows that it is there that young lives are coming to understand the great spiritual principles which rule and control life. It is there the child learns that he doesn't live unto himself alone, that life is give as well as take, that he will never be able to get along in this world if he thinks only of himself and disregards all the others. Every game that has ever been played is simply an exercise in the spiritual truth that if we want to get the most out of life we must subordinate certain selfish desires for the benefit of the public good, that is, that we must submit ourselves to the rule of the game.

I take it that this is why sportsmanship is so highly honored in our day. The good sport, in the noblest sense, is that person who has been wise enough to discover that we must give as well as receive, that we must lose as well as win, and that the important thing is the spirit with which we meet the circumstances of life, that many a man who has lost a contest in physical skill has won a victory in spiritual control.

I read the other day of a man in the diplomatic service of our country who was robbed of several thousand dollars by the brigands of a Balkan state. Immediately representatives of that country waited upon him to apologize. He received them most courteously and reminded them that there were bandits even in his own country. This evidence of bigness, of sportsmanship, of being able to understand the position of the other fellow, at once won for him merited applause. After all, the great test of character is the ability to know and to understand the position of the other fellow. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Here is the most exalted interpretation of character. It means an appreciation and a loyalty to the great spiritual principles of life. It starts on the children's playground with a game and it ends in the presence of Almighty God with love.

And thus it is that through the quest for character, through the struggle to fulfill the dictates of conscience, we are all the time being led into a greater appreciation of the supreme values of the hidden life until we find its ultimate fulfillment in the character of Jesus.

II

But in the second place, this hidden life of ours which we know to be the real life is educated and enlarged through the struggle of faith. It is a very dull soul indeed that never asks itself as to the nature of the world in which it lives. Does the outside world of reality correspond to the inner aspirations of mankind?

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One of the things which we are more and more coming to believe is that the average man is a pretty decent sort of fellow. There are criminals and there are debased and perverted spirits. This is one of the sober facts of life, but they constitute a small minority. On the other hand, there are none that are absolutely perfect. Nothing is more characteristic of the honest man than his frank confession of faults and failings, but after you have made these qualifications, the fact still remains that honesty and kindliness and willingness to serve and sacrifice are very common elements in life. How do these qualities find their counterpart in the universe? Here is the great adventure in faith. Are there woven into the order of things the same qualities that are woven into the inner man, that is, can the honest man expect that the universe will fight on his side? Can the sacrificial man believe that the universe will make his sacrifice worth while? Here you find the quest of the ages. Here you find an almost pathetic

desire for assurance. Here you find the battleground in the struggle for faith.

The Significance of Jesus

And it is here that the significance of Jesus begins to make itself manifest. Why does my friend have to suffer? When I see the misery and trouble in the world, can I still keep my faith in a universe guided by love? And then the story of the cross comes to one and he sees how the suffering there has been transmuted into the comfort and inspiration of humanity. When I wonder whether I shall get the most out of life if I seek only my personal pleasure and forget all about the needs of my fellowmen, then I look at Jesus and there I see a life that gave everything it had to others, and I see the influence which this giving bestowed upon mankind, and my soul is stirred with reverence and admiration and I pray for strength to be like him. Here was a man whose life answers the questions of faith that continually arise and gives to me the assurance that love, that thing which my real self hungers and thirsts after, is woven into the texture of the universe. "Lord, I believe. Help thou my unbelief."

And what a different world this conquest of faith gives to us. It is a world where our fears have been banished and our hopes have been confirmed. It is a world in which we can live joyously and triumphantly. Notice what has happened. We have started with this inner life, this real life of ours, and we have taken the best things of which it is compounded, and we have asked ourselves whether these things find any echo in the greater world of reality, and we have found that they not only find an echo, but that the greater world of reality is not only their assurance but also their source, and so have found ourselves once more in the presence of God.

III

All of this suggests the third great element which comes out of our thought concerning our real selves. Is it possible that just as our spiritual lives are our real lives, so in the outer universe it is not the sticks and stones, the stars and the constellations, but the spirit of God himself that is the great reality? Is it possible that these spirits of ours may make contact with his divine spirit?

I think that one of the greatest burdens that is laid upon the religious world today comes out of the old doctrine of election that was held by the Calvinists. They preached in season and out of season that only a few were to be saved. Some went so far as to set a definite number. The rest were doomed to die forever. Now the unfortunate result has been that men and women have come to think of any vital relationship with God as being confined to a very few, and not being a privilege that is possible for them. Most people are quite ready to assure you that they are not religious, and as near as I can understand, what they mean is that they are not conscious of ecstatic visions of the divine. They have doubted their capacity for finding God through personal experience and so they have not tried to find him, and I think that this is one of the great losses of our day, for if I understand life at all, it clearly teaches that there is a greatly heightened power that comes to everyone who cultivates the devout life.

Power and the Spirit

Recently I attended a dinner given by a group of architects, which was addressed by one of the great architects of our day, and he made the very startling assertion for our generation, that all great art, that all great understanding of the beautiful, had sprung out of a real religious experience. Power comes out of spiritual experience.

We are re-writing our world history and instead of setting up the kings and generals as the important figures, have been setting up the men who have produced new ideals of life, who have had visions of great truths that have grasped the imaginations of men, redirecting and rearranging their lives. The influence of Christ, of Buddha, of Mohammed, of Luther, of Wesley, these are recognized as the historically significant figures today, and all of them received added power because their own real selves had fared forth into the universe and established contact with the source of all reality and power which we call God. We do not realize what a tremendous factor this power is in our own day and generation. We do not canonize our saints any longer, but you cannot understand Lincoln's great power without understanding the mystical

SERMON TITLES AND TEXTS

In its NOVEMBER issue, The Christian Century Pulpit will inaugurate a new department, under the above caption. Titles of sermons, with texts, and by whom preached, will be listed.

Readers of the Pulpit are requested to use the coupon herewith, indicating title and text of some sermon recently preached which has found special favor with their congregations, or which may be of special interest to other ministers.

.....
Title of sermon

.....
Text used

.....
Name of minister

.....
Name of church

.....
Address

side of his life. When he said, "We here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, and that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom," he spoke from a faith born out of his deepest experience.

President Eliot of Harvard university, was one of the greatest creative minds of the last generation. His influence on education was most extraordinary. He talked little about it, but was known by all his friends to be a man who constantly tried to live in the presence of God. One of his friends once wrote to him, "You are the man more than any other who shows me perpetually how to rely on the Eternal for personal strength."

So often and so frequently do you find the men who have had the power to tremendously affect their day and generation being men who have found the secret of their power in their approach to God, that there cannot remain any doubt whatever regarding its reality.

I have been asking you to carry out with me the implication of that thing which is nearest and most real to you and it has led us through the quest of character to the law of Jesus, through the assurance of faith to trust in our world, and through the devotional life to personal power produced by God himself. If this be so, then the understanding of spiritual things becomes the supreme task of your life and of my own; "For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Who's Who in This Issue

IF *Congregationalists had bishops, there* would be no question as to whom British Congregationalists would name as their Archbishop of Canterbury. It would be the Rev. J. D. JONES, pastor of Richmond Hill church, Bournemouth, England. Dr. Jones has held every high office that his brethren can give him. He preaches to perhaps the largest Congregational congregation in the British Isles. His sermon which opens the present issue was delivered at the recent International Congregational Council, held in Dr. Jones' own city, at which many distinguished American Congregationalists also spoke.

The two MACARTNEY *brothers, (they* spell their surname differently but they are no less brothers for that!), Dr. CLARENCE E. and Dr. ALBERT J.—the former, pastor of First Church, Pittsburgh, the latter, pastor of the Church of the Covenant, Washington, D. C., both Presbyterian—have attained eminence in the American pulpit. Dr. Clarence, next to W. J. Bryan, was the leader of the Fundamentalist movement in his denomination, and came near to election as moderator of the General Assembly at Grand Rapids in 1924. A little episode at the Baltimore General Assembly in 1926 marks quite definitely the end of almost a decade of anxious tension in the Presbyterian church over the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy. Dr. Clarence had made a characteristic speech, very earnest and very firm. Following him Dr. Albert came to the platform and began by saying, "The trouble with Clarence is that he is a bachelor; he would see things differently if he had a wife and several children to take the burden of the world off his shoulders." The sedate assembly was transformed with good humor. Albert went on in a different but no less intimate mood. He recalled vividly and tenderly the evenings long gone when he and his brother said their prayers at their mother's knee. He passed easily to the picture of Mother Church having room for both brothers whose theological opinions were quite dissimilar, but who met at the feet of Christ. From that moment the tension relaxed. It is no exaggeration to say that the episode marked the definite passing of the harsh aspect of a controversy that had threatened to divide the Presbyterian church.

Rev. ARTHUR P. VAUGHN *is a Princeton* Seminary man and pastor of the Union Church at Avon Park, Florida. His sermon in this issue on "God's Laboratory" presents an original and intriguing theme. Our readers will be glad to make the acquaintance of this thoughtful preacher.

Professor DOUGLAS C. MACINTOSH, author of "The Reasonableness of Christianity," and other books, teaches theology at Yale Divinity school. He has been a conspicuous public figure of late due to the rejection of his application for naturalization as an American citizen. He was born in Canada, and served in the late war, but did not like the idea of promising to support this country in any kind of war whether it met the approval of his conscience or not. His case has recently been reversed, and this "dangerous" man is now, no doubt, enrolled as an American citizen.

Texas is sending another preacher to The Christian Century Pulpit this month, Rev. ILION T. JONES of the Madison Square Presbyterian, U. S. A. (that "U. S. A." means "North") of San Antonio. Dr. Jones was born in Texas and graduated at Trinity University, Waxahachie, same state. He is the author of "Is There a God?" published by Macmillan in 1922, and does regular journalistic work for the Presbyterian Advance.

There is a great church in Chicago which has become great as the result of two factors. One is the agreement, conscientiously lived up to, by the various denominations of the city not to enter the rapidly growing Bryn Mawr district with denominational churches but to support the Community church which was established when the neighborhood had only a few neighbors. Surrounded today by thousands of people there stands a beautiful Gothic structure known as the Bryn Mawr Community church. The other factor in making this church great is Dr. M. RUSSELL BOYNTON, who has been its pastor for nearly a decade. He is the son of a famous father, Dr. Nehemiah Boynton, whom everybody knows. But his career stands upon its own feet. Dr. Boynton is a virile and prophetic preacher, and he has a system of pastoral work that is all his own.

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

THE League of Nations assembly sitting at Geneva always opens with some stirring speeches by European leaders. This year a new voice was heard when Arthur Henderson, secretary of state for foreign affairs of the labor government in Great Britain, announced that his government from this time forward would make disarmament its primary policy in international affairs. By disarmament he meant the substantial reduction of all military preparations, not of the naval forces alone, but of army and air forces as well. Mr. Henderson spoke directly after M. Briand had eloquently set forth his plan for a United States of Europe. Great Britain, said her foreign secretary, will consider this proposal only on condition that it is preceded by actual disarmament in accordance with the spirit of the Kellogg pact and the covenant of the league. Declaring that the British favored the insertion of the Kellogg pact in the covenant, and the acceptance of obligatory arbitration and other pacific measures, Mr. Henderson flatly said that he would wash his hands of the whole business unless the continental powers agreed to disarm. "The authors of the covenant inserted Article 8 as an obligation to accept general reduction of national forces. That obligation has not been honored, though it was incurred eleven years ago. The people of the world are growing impatient and doubtful." There is something especially interesting in the fact that Mr. Henderson, who represents the enlightened mind of the world on this question, was formerly a Methodist local preacher.

The Book of the Month

JESUS AND THE AMERICAN MIND. *By Halford E. Luccock. The Abingdon Press.* $2.00.

IF YOU have ever felt, as many, alas, do feel—that the established success of Christianity throughout western civilization leaves no room for heroism and sacrifice on the part of Christians in our own day, just read this book and be thoroughly disillusioned. There is a little hero in each one of us. And so long as we keep on speaking terms with Christ the heroic in us cannot altogether die. But what chance is there for a Christian to be a hero in a society in which Christianity is wholly respectable? Many of Christ's followers look wistfully out upon a "Christianized" western world and sigh, like Alexander, for more worlds to conquer. They wish that they might have lived in the heroic age of Christianity, when to have been a Christian was to stand against the whole world. What they need is to have their eyes opened! And Dr. Luccock will open their eyes. They will read his book with growing amazement at their own past blindness. And when they lay it down it will haunt them—not in their dreams only, but in their most lucid and responsible hours. Compelled as I am to pack into small space an adequate comment, I say this: Luccock's book makes me feel that being a Christian today in "Christian" America, is as hazardous and heroic an undertaking as it could possibly have been for the Christians of the primitive church. His analysis of modern society as the embodiment of forces and sanctions which are the very antithesis of the mind of Christ leaves me weak and limp as I contemplate any identification of myself with the enormously unpopular task of Christianizing Christendom. It almost seems as if the centuries of so-called Christian "progress" have to be written off as dead loss and that Christ must begin all over again. He must hand-pick a few disciples and they must go out to preach his gospel as if it had never been preached before. I wonder if I have the courage to belong to this little band! There are some strong souls who will take the risk, but what about me?

A Thought for the Month

HAVE we not argued too much about religion, and too little allowed the objects of faith to make their own argument? After all, our arguments do not produce faith. They may produce belief, but faith is more than belief. Jesus did not argue with people. Whenever his critics and enemies tried to entice him into an argument he checked them with some puzzling or cryptic saying which took their wits away. "Render to Caesar," and "God is not the God of the dead but of the living," were not so much arguments as they were devices for escape from arguments. He presented no proofs of the existence of God or of immortality or of the obligation to live the good life. He appealed directly to his hearers' own insight. If he had tried to prove any single beatitude he would have weakened its truth. Jesus seemed to take account of the fact that faith is much more a matter of the will than of the intellect. Once he said: "Anyone who chooses to do God's will shall understand." Our arguments in support of our faith are always precarious and fragile. The surer test of faith is to commit ourselves to it with a will. If it is false it will play havoc with us; if it is true it will demonstrate its truth by the peace and power and the sense of adjustment which it brings to us. We can only know that God exists by living as if he did exist. We can only know that life is good by taking it as if it were good—by tasting it with an expectant tongue. We can only know that our soul survives the grave by living as if we were worthy to survive; thus we may enter into "the power of an endless life." And we can only know what Christ can do for us if we yield ourselves to him.

Charles Clayton Morrison

Looking Forward

WITH THIS ISSUE The Christian Century Pulpit begins its second year. During its first year, its readers have been telling the editor that the publication has lived up to its original purpose—to publish sermons representative of today's pulpit, sermons "providing for the minister inspiration and suggestion for his own preaching task."

For the new year, 1930-31, a far-reaching program has been planned in accordance with the PULPIT's special purpose of anticipating the high days and seasons of the year, and of our national life.

Our NOVEMBER issue will contain two Thanksgiving and three Armistice day sermons, along with other sermons that will inspire the preacher to his best creative work.

The DECEMBER issue will be an unusual Christmas number: every sermon included will treat the Christ theme. The New Year's note will also be struck.

The JANUARY issue will have unusual interest in that it will be a Young Ministers' Number: all the sermons will be contributed by young men who have graduated from the seminaries within the past five years.

The FEBRUARY issue will be something of a Hero number, with the names of Lincoln and Washington giving the keynote for several of the sermons included.

MARCH and APRIL will bring to readers an unprecedented wealth of sermons especially selected to aid in promoting during the Lenten and Easter season a genuine spiritual awakening.

MAY will bring an educational number, with sermons that will be in keeping with the Commencement season.

—and every succeeding number will have value to every minister who likes to adapt his preaching to the season's call and needs.

THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY PULPIT
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The Christian Century Pulpit has, in one short year, established its right to a place on the desk of every progressive and thoughtful minister throughout the English-speaking world. As you have profited from its reading during the past year, so may minister friends of yours, not now subscribers, profit during the coming year, if you will but call it to their attention. The coupon to the right is for your convenience. Use it!

What the Ministers Are Saying about the PULPIT:

"I must tell you how much The Christian Century Pulpit has meant to me personally. I am teaching a course in homiletics at Garrett Seminary, and am finding the publication of great pedagogical and inspirational help. It is doing an inestimable amount of good."—LEWIS H. CHRISMAN, *Department of English Literature, West Virginia Wesleyan College.*

"I want to express my deep appreciation for the Pulpit. It is heartening as well as stimulating."—CHARLES B. TUPPER, *Central Christian Church, Warren, O.*

"Herewith my appreciation of the pronouncedly fine service The Christian Century Pulpit is rendering."——G. RAY JORDAN, *Dilworth Methodist Church, South, Charlotte, N. C.*

"I'm counting on The Christian Century Pulpit for my laboratory work in sermon construction with my classes this year. It's a godsend."—WILLIAM L. STIDGER, *Professor of Homiletics, Boston University School of Religion.*

"You are giving pastors a real tonic in these sermons presented to them in the Pulpit."—CHRISTIAN F. REISNER, *Broadway Temple (Methodist), New York.*

"I sincerely appreciate The Christian Century Pulpit. Surely the time calls for the most vigorous and convincing preaching the church can give to the world. We can all profit by reading the messages of some of the master preachers of our time."—ELMER W. HARNER, *St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Denver, Colo.*

"Your periodical makes delightful reading and I look eagerly forward to its coming each month."—PAUL M. WATSON, *First Presbyterian Church, Sheffield, Ala.*

"Let me tell you how very much I am enjoying The Christian Century Pulpit. The Christian Century and the Pulpit are excellent team-mates. Of all the magazines that come across my desk, these are the choicest."—HAROLD W. RUOPP, *William Street Methodist Church, Delaware, O.*

"I certainly enjoy the Pulpit. It is a real pleasure and of great profit to read sermons which are up to date."—LAUREN D. THOMAS, *Methodist Church, Henderson, Ia.*

"It is a series of very fine messages that have come to us in the Pulpit during the past year."—WILLIAM CHALMERS COVERT, *Gen. Sec. Board of Christian Education of Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.*

"The Christian Century Pulpit has been a welcome visitor. I have read the sermons of each month with the utmost interest."—DOUGLAS V. MAGERS, *Second Presbyterian Church, Tulsa, Okla.*

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Gentlemen: Please send me The Pulpit for one year, beginning at once. I enclose $2.00.

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